L.P.Ts. into H.P.Ts. in Tamil Nadu particularly in Nagercoil inview of the increasing population there;

(b) if so, the details thereof, location-wise; and

(c) the time by which the projects are likely to be started?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM): (a) and (b) With a view to further strengthen TV service in the State of Tamil Nadu, 19 TV Transmitter projects of varying powers are, at present, under implementation/envisaged to be set up in the State which include 3 High Power TV Transmitters (HPTs) proposed for Dharmapuri, Kumbakonam and Tirunelveli in replacement of the existing Low Power TV Transmitters (LPTs). There is, however, no approved scheme, at present, to convert the existing LPT at Nagarcoil to HPT.

(c) The normal lead time involved in the implementation of High Power TV Transmitter projects is about 3-4 years after approval of the scheme by the competent authority and subject to availability of adequate funds and infrastructural facilities.

[Translation]

Telephone Directory in Bihar

2088. SHRI DINESH CHANDRA YADAV: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the year in which Telephone Directory was released for Saharsa, Supaul and Madhepura districts of Bihar;

(b) the time by which new Telephone Directory is likely to be released;

(c) the reasons for delay in this regard; and

(d) the steps being taken by the Government to ensure timely release of the Telephone directory alongwith corrigenda?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) The Telephone directory for Saharsa, Supaul and Madhepura districts of Bihar was last released in 1994.

(b) The new directory is likely to be released by March, 97.

(c) The Saharsa Telecom. district was formed recently. The compilation of the subscribers list falling under the jurisdiction of Saharsa took some time. The telephone directory of Saharsa Telecom Distt. will also include Telephone Nos. of Supaul and Madhepura.

(d) Necessary steps have been taken to release the directory in time.

[English]

National Mineral Policy

2089. SHRI SRIBALLAV PANIGRAHI: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have recently brought changes in the National Mineral Policy, 1993;

(b) If so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government propose to lease out diamond mines to private sector, and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA): (a) No Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) As per national Mineral Policy, 1993 thirteen minerals (including diamonds), which were hitherto reserved exclusively for the public sector have been thrown open to the private sector with a view to attract larger investments including foreign investment and state-of-the-art technology for exploration and exploitation.

The grant of mining leases is governed by the provisions of the Mines and Minerals (Regulation & Development) Act, 1957 and the rules made thereunder. The applications for grant of mining leases are received and processed by the State Governments. However, the approval of Central Government is required only in case of minerals covered under Schedule-I of the Mines and Minerals (Regulation & Development) Act, 1957.

Foreign Satellite Channels

2090. SHRI RAMCHANDRA VEERAPPA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have drawn up plans to regulate foreign satellite channels;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any authority has been constituted in this regard; and

(d) it so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM): (a) to (d) Government intends to introduce a bill in the Parliament which would seek to bring the foreign satellite channels within the ambit of the proposed law.

[Translation]

Opening of Godown at Tohara Railway Station

2091. SHRI SHATRUGHAN PRASAD SINGH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state: